

The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

Vol. XLII

SEPTEMBER, 1933

No. 3

HOW TO MEET TROUBLE

A SERMON BY REV. LON RAY CALL

When people are in trouble they turn to religion. That is if they understand what religion is. If they have confused it with superstition they may wisely turn from it. If they have thought of it as a matter of creed or dogma they may think little about it when trouble comes. If they look upon it as a luxurious appendage to life to be supported as one supports a social or athletic club they are quite likely to drop it when sorely pressed. But if they have learned to look upon religion as a philosophy of life or as a determining attitude toward life's experiences, then when their houses fall, they will turn to religion and ask what it has to offer by way of solace and encouragement and sustaining strength.

This is particularly true in these days when troubles have been multiplied because of the terrible times through which we are passing. Many a man is standing today where Job stood, seeing first his possessions fade into nothingness, then his family stricken and then he, himself, laid low by the scourges of ill fortune, until at length, stripped and peeled, bare and helpless he looks upon a world through hopeless eyes and cries out in his utter agony, "My soul is weary unto death, would God that I were dead!" Hearts are breaking all about us. Despair sits enthroned in many homes. The world is full of infections of unutterable sadness and torments of inescapable gloom. It is natural and right that we should then ask of religion what it has to offer to our troubled world.

In order that we may find an answer to that important question it may be best to turn for a moment to ascertain, if we can, how religion hitherto has helped peo-

ple to meet trouble. There is not just one answer. Religion has approached the problem from various angles.

The answer of what we sometimes call the "old-fashioned" religion was to the effect that trouble is sent upon us to refine our spirit and test our character. According to this view we have no right to expect anything but distress on earth since it is a training ground for heaven. It is a vile world and its sufferings must be endured and its temptations to ease and comfort put behind us because our real homes for eternity can be gained only by winning the battle. A sermon preached a hundred years ago was entitled "Pain Here, Glory Hereafter." And there was a song about doing without pie since it was expected that for the worthy there will "be pie in the sky when you die." Much of the attitude of this old-fashioned religion still thrives and there are monasteries, even in America, where men live in poverty and toil and enforced suffering in the hope that their reward will be great in the bright land beyond death.

There is of course much to be said against this attitude since it leaves us indifferent to the task of building a better world. One is seldom zealous in making improvements on an estate where he is a stranger, especially if the evils he encounters there are said to be for his improvement. And there is little satisfaction in the assurance that the road to an uncertain heaven must of necessity be paved with torment here. But at bottom there is a vital truth, and a helpful suggestion, in this attitude. For beyond doubt pain does lead to sympathy, suffering to love and poverty to delight in the simple blessings. It takes the darkness to make the stars bright. Troubles

Publication Office
134 Summer Street, Boston, Mass.

Monthly, except August
50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents

Check, post-office order, or stamps should be
sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange
25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office
at Boston, Mass.

"Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of
postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of
October 3, 1917, authorized July 17, 1922."

do have a way of refining the gold of character from the dross of material and selfish gain. Suffering calls forth the sublime virtues, softens the sensibilities of the hard of heart, reproves the presumptuous, purges the soul of selfishness, teaches a more perfect patience and instills a more profound humility. "To have suffered much," says Coventry Patmore, "is like knowing many languages; thou hast learned to understand all and to make thyself intelligible to all." In times of trouble we enter into a common sorrow that knits the world together into one great fellowship; we are all companions in suffering. This is probably what the ancients meant by trouble as the training ground for character. It produces saints.

Somewhat different, though closely related, is the attitude encouraged by Jesus of submission to trouble while cultivating those human qualities that will bring inner peace and joy. If you will recall for a moment the condition of the world into which Jesus was born you will remember that he ministered to a race of Jews under bondage to Rome. Those people knew what trouble was beyond our most tragic experiences. Roman soldiers filled the streets to the despair of the Jews. Roman tax-gatherers hounded the pauperized Jews without mercy. If it is true that "once to be a Roman was greater than to be a King" it is also true that once to be a Jew was worse than to be a slave. Into this world of trouble Jesus was born. At the very moment of his birth his father and mother were on a long, toilsome journey to a place appointed by the Romans to list their taxes. Even his mother, frail as she was, was forced to go. As Jesus grew to manhood

the situation became constantly more irksome. There was frequent talk of revolt but it seemed hopeless. Jesus saw this and the burden of his teaching and the example of his life was the plea for meekness, for humility, for peaceful and quiet submission to external powers. "Blessed are you," he said, "when you are reviled, or persecuted, if righteousness is on your side." Blessed are the peacemakers for peace rather than revolt becomes the children of God; blessed are they who bear the yoke of poverty and toil. The wonderful insight of Jesus and his power of living a life of supreme spiritual joy in the midst of the most cruel of oppressions led at last to his deification in the hearts of his people. It is the heart of his message that in times of trouble one should cultivate the resources of the spiritual life to the end that they cannot be conditioned or lessened by material change.

This attitude of Jesus was for his day the means of salvation to those who were then in trouble. The conditions under which we live are different. We are not under bondage to any power. Our life is what we make it. But there are conditions which we cannot overcome. Therefore Jesus still has significance for us in that he shows us how to maintain a calm strength and an inner peace even in spite of the evils that hover around us.

In New York a few months ago I heard someone say that Jesus would be sadly out of place in that great city for he wouldn't be able to drive an automobile or read a stock-ticker. That is evident, of course, for his age was different. But Jesus might have something to offer by way of suggesting the real values of life when one's automobile is sacrificed because one can't pay for it, or when the stock-ticker shows that a fortune has collapsed. To people who suffer now the message and example of Jesus are still mountains of spiritual strength.

A third way to meet trouble comes from an increasingly popular attitude of outright denial that suffering exists. The most rapidly growing church in America emphasizes the unreality of evil and

therefore encourages its devotees to dismiss unpleasant things as illusions. This has always seemed to me to be an unethical exemption from legitimate pity and sympathy for never a day passes that we are not drawn to the suffering loved ones about us. The spirit of human helpfulness which is indeed the spirit of practical religion grows numb and cold if this suffering is ignored or denied. How can people be continually cheerful in such a world as this unless they harden their hearts?

But like other religious attitudes, there is a certain value for us in this particular attitude. It is this, that since so many of our ills are illusion we can get rid of them by denying that they exist. Worry and fear are the hobgoblins of diseased or abnormal minds. Much of the distress that comes to us is due to anxiety about something that cannot be helped and the best thing we can do about it is to quit worrying about it. Someone has said that most anxiety of this sort is in somewhat this proportion: things that never happen, forty per cent; things over and past that couldn't be changed with all the worry in the world, thirty per cent; petty worries, ten per cent; needless health worries, ten per cent; and real legitimate concern not over eight per cent. Since so many troubles have been imagined into existence it is well to make an effort to imagine them out of existence.

There is, however, another attitude that is becoming more potent in these days, a viewpoint that is rooted in the best of our religious traditions, and of great value to us in the struggle with the very real troubles we are now facing. It is the attitude of revolt. We would face the troubles that come to us, probe them to their roots and get rid of the evils that brought them about. The problem of suffering is essentially an economic problem. The poor and the sick and the vicious will be with us so long as society permits a few men of material ambitions and financial power to enslave their fellowmen in the bonds of economic serfdom. The only basic reason there is for the vast amount of suffering

now taking place all about us is the greed of selfish men encouraged by a philosophy of individualism which has motivated our world beyond its time. Human distress is a red flag warning us of the dangers inherent in our catch-as-catch-can way of living. We can get rid of the poverty and the terrible troubles that follow in its wake if we will face the difficulties at their roots and pull them up. Religion inspires this attitude by its noble examples of prophet and martyr and apostle; by its insistence on justice and truth; by its vision of the beloved community and by its countless devotees who faced any hardship in great joy because they saw beyond the difficulties the coming of the day of peace and happiness for all.

A PRAYER

O God, we thank thee for all the beautiful, little things of our lives and for the dear, familiar faces which every day grow more lovely and more precious. We are ashamed of all the difficulties we make for ourselves and others, of our ill tempers, our blind prejudices, our stupid ways. We pray that our spirits may grow wise enough to see how queer we are; how lenient to our own conceits and how harsh to the conceits of others. We do not offer a great prayer that we may be people without any fault or any fear; but we offer a little prayer that we may be people whom others find easy to forgive and good to live with. Grant us great release of soul in little moments. May we never be afraid of loving overmuch. And although there remain fears which lurk and whisper of loss and separation, may we find that the night is full of secrets and of stars. Amen.

VIVIAN T. POMEROY.

To plod alike through sun and shower,
 Fearless of test and strain;
 To fully live each golden hour,
 That cannot come again;
 To treasure friendships bold of gold,
 Help others in the way,
 And ne'er let ardent fires grow cold—
 That is to live a day.

CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

MRS. JOHN A. MCCADDIN, *Chairman*, 21 Ashfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

A correspondent writing to the Exchange for the first time should always give as reference the name and address of her minister.

When a correspondent moves to a new address, notice should be sent to Headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., and to those persons who have been sending letters and reading matter.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of its magazine by addressing letters asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who disobeys this rule will be dropped from the list, and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by the Central Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to the Chairman of this Department.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

APPEALS

1. Mrs. Joe Dodd, R. 2, Sandidges, Va., writes to the Exchange once more for a bit of cheer. She says that she is shut-in most of the time with rheumatism. She would like some embroidery and reading.

2. Mrs. Coleman Neaves, Crumpler, N. C., would appreciate something to amuse her five children, three boys and two girls, the oldest not 8 years old until October. She would like some sewing for herself.

3. I have been a member of the Cheerful Letter Exchange for a long time, and am always glad to hear from anyone. I would be so glad if someone would send me some quilt pieces and thread. I have eight children, the oldest 19 years. I would like the *Cheerful Letter* magazine after someone has finished reading it each month. Mrs. Caroline Wall, R. 1, Box 44, Wadesboro, N. C.

4. As it has been some five or six years since I have heard from any of the *Cheerful Letter* friends, I am writing again as I have moved and changed my address from Rupert, Ark., to R. 2, No. 6, Roswell, N. Mex. I would be proud to hear from any of the friends again as I am among strangers. I would like some

pictures and books for my girl 9, and my baby boy 2½, and some quilt pieces and embroidery thread for myself. Mrs. Lloyd Pack, R. 2, No. 6, Roswell, N. Mex.

5. I am the mother of five children. I still have four of them at home. I am one that understands that it is a great task caring for the children. I am getting very unhealthy the last few years and would like to receive quilt materials or anything that would be a comfort for me to do in the house. Mrs. Rachel McDonald, Rex, Ark.

6. I would like to thank all the fine people who have written and sent us papers in the past year. We are very grateful to all for all that was sent here to us on our Wyoming homestead. We would like to be remembered again. I love to write letters and do embroidery work of any kind. The children are a boy 10, a girl 8 and one 6 years of age. We live 25 miles from Moorcroft. Any reading is greatly appreciated. Mrs. Blanche Thompson, Moorcroft, Wyo.

7. Miss Bertha Harper, R.F.D. No. 1, Box 18, Republican Grove, Va., writes asking a jig-saw puzzle and some 10 lb. sugar bags to finish a spread she is making. She would like any of the popular magazines.

8. I haven't heard from the Cheerful Letter people in quite a while. I certainly do thank all who have sent me the quilt pieces. I hope that I will be remembered again soon. I still would appreciate embroidery thread and quilt pieces. Mother is lonely and likes reading; so does Father. If it isn't asking too much, I would like some reading of any kind for them such as magazines and Western stories. Geneva Goats, Copeland, Ark.

9. Will you please print a few words in the magazine for a lonely married woman whose health is not very good and who would appreciate a little cheer of any kind. I have a little daughter 2 years old. I would be delighted with anything for her and some embroidery thread and quilt scraps for myself and reading. Mrs. Alfred Saunders, Tellico Plains, Tenn.

10. I want to thank the Cheerful Letter friends for remembering me. I have 10 children and am confined at home, and am not able to do much work. I would be glad to receive reading matter, sewing or anything that anyone may care to send to me. Mrs. Joe Freeman, Spencer, Va.

OFFER

Mrs. F. C. Wells, 416 Caton Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y., has a box full of old black bead trimming which would make a large quantity of small beads for anyone who does bead work and could use black ones. She will send them to anyone asking for them.

CHANGES OF ADDRESSES

Mrs. Bernard Wallace from Glasgow, Va., to Buena Vista, Va., c/o Mr. J. T. Wilmer.

Mrs. Tina Dalton from Tellico Plains to Epperson, Tenn.

Mrs. Jessie C. Broadway from Polkton to Norwood, R. 2, c/o Mr. Vance Duse, N. C.

Mrs. Opal Rawls from Bellevue to R. 4, Box 4, Chillicothe, Tex.

Mrs. Ola Ross from Mt. Enterprise to Minden, Tex.

Mrs. Lloyd Pack from Rupert, Ark., to R. 2, No. 6, Roswell, N. Mex.

NOTICE

As we go to press, news has come of the death on July 14 of Prof. C. C. Wright, of Hunting Creek, N. C. A correspondent, since his student days, of the Waltham (Mass.) Cheerful Letter Committee, he has been a valued friend, and admired for his many sterling qualities.

We of the Cheerful Letter Exchange extend sincere sympathy to his family.

MEASUREMENT

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

Who measures man beside a hill
Will find that he is humble still.

Tall pines against a northern sky
Have wisdom I could profit by.

The grave sweet songs the hill brooks
sing
Have themes they learned from every
spring.

And there is reason why the thrush
Prefers for song the twilight's hush.

Let me be humble, then, before
The high hills' truth, the hill brooks' lore;

And at the twilight's ending pray
With thrushes for the vanished day.

Let me remember seed and sod
Reveal the prophecies of God!

—*The Churchman, New York.*

A well-known attorney was always lecturing his office boy, whether he needed it or not. One day he chanced to hear the following conversation between the boy and the one employed next door:

"How much does your chief pay you?" asked the latter.

"I get \$1,500 a year. Five dollars a week in cash and the rest in legal advice!"—*Washington Labor.*

DOWN THE RED SEA TO ADEN

It is slightly past midnight when we leave behind the red and green signal lights which mark the southern end of the Suez Canal at Tewfik and set our course down the Gulf of Suez toward the Red Sea. To the west across a wide stretch of desert rise mountains which guard the Nile Valley. To the east between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Akaba lies the Peninsula of Sinai with its range of mountains, barren, rocky and forbidding.

It was probably through this arm of the sea that the Children of Israel passed. Just where they crossed will, in all probability, remain forever a mystery. That it was in this general vicinity there is no doubt. A few miles to the south, on the eastern shore, is an oasis with a group of fine palm trees, like an emerald set in a sea of sand. This is known as the "Wells of Moses," where tradition holds that the Israelites halted for refreshment after their exciting passage through the waters. It is not always safe to accept these legends as authoritative, for the Oriental takes delight in satisfying the Occidental curiosity with tales sprung largely from imagination. He has a way of dealing in allegory and symbolism that is quite foreign to the European or American.

The mountain range to the east, it seems, offers more substantial proof of its Biblical importance. The Scriptural narrative fits into it with little need for adjustment. The whole range is high. The mountain with the twin peaks, Jebel Horeb, lifts its jagged points to a height of more than 8000 feet. Jebel Mousa, the "mountain of Moses," where, tradition holds, the redoubtable prophet received the tables of stone, is somewhat lower and is shut from the view of the traveler through the gulf by the great bulk of the higher peaks of Jebel Horeb.

How significant that a small area not larger than many an American state, here in the extreme west of Asia, has given to the world three great religions, the Christian, the Moslem, and the Jewish. Is there something in this desolate

environment that stirs the thoughts of men to contemplation of "the things of the Spirit"? Be that as it may, out of this rugged, forbidding region have come the greatest of the world's prophets.

At the foot of one of the mountains of the range, Jebel Katherina, is situated St. Catherine's Monastery, where are still deposited some of the early manuscripts of the New Testament. It was here, about fifty years ago, that the Codex Siniactius was found, one of the earliest and most important manuscripts of the New Testament. It was presented to Tsar Alexander of Russia, but its present whereabouts are, I believe, uncertain. Biblical scholars who specialize in New Testament manuscripts still make the journey across the barren desert into the heart of these mountains, in the hope that among the many treasures of St. Catherine's Monastery there may yet be found some manuscript that will shed new light upon the sacred Scriptures. Such journeys are usually made from Tor—a settlement well down the eastern shore of the Gulf. This journey is not without its dangers, for nomadic tribes still wander lawlessly over these barren stretches. The country both sides of the Gulf is under Egyptian rule.

It is more than 1200 miles from the mouth of the Gulf of Suez to the Strait of Bab-el Mandeb, which connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden. For some distance from the Gulf of Suez the shores on both sides are grim, rocky and forbidding, but in a few hours land disappears and we plow the blue waters unconscious of the desert shores. One wonders why waters almost as blue as the Mediterranean should be termed the "Red" Sea. But it appears that at certain seasons a vegetable growth which thrives beneath the surface gives a reddish hue to the waters. In the lower reaches of the Red Sea we observe the reddish weeds which gave its name to this body of water. As they float below the surface, they give the appearance of shallow water, so that one might easily think the ship was running aground.

Halfway down on the east coast lies

the town of Jedda, the port for Mecca, the holy city of the Moslems. Here for centuries have come every year thousands of pilgrims to worship at the most sacred of Moslem shrines. Where formerly non-believers were forbidden entrance within the sacred precincts of the city, since the great war a more liberal policy is maintained toward the stranger, so that now Christian visitors are not uncommon.

At last we catch the flash of the light at Perim against dark clouds that hang low over the southern horizon, and our passage of the Red Sea is finished. The rocky island from which this light sends out its beam lies at the entrance to the Strait of Bab-el Mandeb, the "Gate of Affliction," or "Gate of Tears," as the Oriental terms it, a waterway more than two miles in length, connecting the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden. Next morning our ship comes to anchor in the harbor of Aden, and makes ready to put off the great piles of mail bags taken from the hold the previous evening. The destination of these mail bags furnishes a study in the geography of the East. The bags are handled by Arabs, thin brown men, stripped to the waist, turbaned, their only garment a baggy something suspended from the waist. Here are also Somalis, coal black, tall, erect and sinewy, from the neighboring African coast of French, British and Italian Somaliland.

This Arabic town, Aden, is built on and around steep volcanic peaks nearly 2000 feet in height, and as fantastic in contour as slag from a blast furnace. The hills are sheer and steep and under the hot sun present a forbidding appearance. The town is built on the north and west side of these hills and in the "Crater," a shallow cup inclosed on three sides by the beetling hills. This quarter of the town is reached through a narrow pass between two of the eminences, scarcely wide enough to permit the passing of two vehicles, unless driven with utmost care.

The harbor is alive with strange craft. Blunt-nosed Arab dhow, long rakish

craft manned by Somali oarsmen, smart motor launches, slender canoes, trim yachts and racing tugs quarter the harbor or crowd about the ship, all eager for business. The ubiquitous merchant of the Orient is here with wares in great variety.

Boarding a roughly built motorboat manned by blacks, we go ashore for a visit to the town. The heat of a blazing sun does not encourage a walking tour and we charter an American-made car with an Arab driver, to visit the "Tanks" and the town in the Crater. The streets are rough, unpaved roads along which camels are plodding, dragging water carts and loads of goods bound for the docks.

We bowl along the narrow streets, our driver artfully dodging many camels, and proceed to the park at the entrance to the Tanks in the outskirts of the Crater. These are several large reservoirs built into the rocks, one above another, reaching back through a precipitous ravine into the heart of the hills. Their origin is lost in the distant past. It is probable that they are very old, for the impounding of the rainfall, the only water supply on this volcanic island, must have been a necessity of the very early inhabitants. These Tanks have been from time to time cleaned of rubbish and repaired, so that they present the appearance of well-built structures, strong and in good repair. Now they are dry as the desert. Several years may pass without a drop of rain, when suddenly it comes, a torrential downpour which, running off the shelving cliffs, fills the Tanks, the higher overflowing into the lower ones. The use of the Tanks is sold at auction, but because of the infrequency and uncertainty of the rainfall the buyer takes a great risk of loss. An attempt has been made to make a garden of the approach to the Tanks, and the small trees, well irrigated, are flourishing. The water for this purpose is now hauled from Sheikh Othman, several miles distant. This bit of green is most welcome in the midst of so much aridity.—*Albert F. Gilmore, in Christian Science Monitor.*

MY RAINBOW

There's gold at the end of my rainbow!

Suppose that it shouldn't be true;
Suppose all my dreams and my plans and
my schemes

Should lead me to naught when I'm
through?

Suppose that the chase is a failure?

Why should I regret or repine?

Though never a hoard may be mine as
reward,

The joy of the seeking is mine.

So if at the end of the rainbow

I find not the treasure I sought,
I'll rest for a bit to recover my grit
And then I shall cherish this thought:

Oh, there are two ends to a rainbow!

Since this one of treasure is bare,
I'll seek for the skies where the other end
lies

And look for the gold that is there.

—Anon.

THE TEST OF FAILURE

When we find that we cannot do what we should like to do, what then? When we find that our dreams are impossibilities? When we find that the canvas we would paint we are not able to paint? When we find that what we want to accomplish we cannot, what then? Then comes the test of life. Then we stand at the dividing of the two roads. Then either we become a failure or we become a success. When I cannot find the best, and have to be content with the second-best? When I cannot be first and find that I can only, perhaps, be the fifth or sixth, what then? There are two ways open to us. One way is that we become dispirited, we become sour, we become cynical. We say that life is not fair, that competition is not a good guide, that the best men often are the failures apparently, and that the men who seem to get on are not worthy of it. We condemn the world all around, we go into ourselves, and give up any real life. A man that becomes sour and cynical is done for. I cannot find all I wish, I cannot do all I

should like, but what I *can* do I will do. What I *can* accomplish I will accomplish. If I have to be content with the second-best, I will do my part in that second-best. If I cannot be foreman, I will be a workman. If I cannot be chief, I will be a follower. Jesus failed outwardly, he succeeded inwardly marvelously, and I think somehow that that is what you and I have to do. I suppose you all feel, when you are really in earnest with yourself, that you have failed, but what we have got to do is so to live, so to serve, that we create at least in our children, or at least in those who notice us, a dream. If I have left in my children a dream of goodness and duty, if you have left in your children an ideal of duty and of goodness, you have given something that by and by will shape the world. God help us when we find we are only second-rate to be second-rate splendidly, and to have such a spiritual touch with God that all who follow are closer to the Almighty. I do not mind if I do fail, if I inspire a few good thoughts that by and by will bring forth fruit. Never mind if you do fail, if you have said and done some things that by and by will bring forth their harvest. What matter if I do not sing the song, if I inspire others to sing it? What matter if I cannot carve the statue, if I make others able so to do? What matter if I cannot paint a beautiful picture, if I make others see the beautiful? What matter if I sin, if in my repentance I make others hate sin a little more? We do not fail, if we do our duty.

God help us so to do.

—Miles Hanson.

If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness,
If I have moved among my race,
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain—
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake!

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

THE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT of the CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

A good book is a dependable friend both in trouble and in happiness. The habit of reading opens up a new world and is a comfort and solace all one's life.

The Library Department of the *Cheerful Letter*, acting on these beliefs, sends away each year some six thousand volumes and several thousand magazines. These are shipped in small lots directly to the recipients, by the various Cheerful Letter Branches, acting under the guidance of the Library Chairman. It is her duty to investigate applications for books, to allot such appeals to Branches offering books, and to keep records of the libraries and of the number of volumes sent. We have several hundred active libraries on our lists and about a hundred libraries are aided annually. The majority of these are school libraries in towns unable to supply proper library facilities for their children. Many of the schools are consolidated and high schools anxious to become accredited on their state lists. Other libraries are in small community centers in remote places.

Perhaps you parents who read this are too busy to form the habit of reading books, but if you encourage your children to read, and to love it, you will be giving them a gift which will make their whole lives richer and happier. Perhaps they will never see the world and its wonderful countries, but the next best thing is to read about them,—the beautiful places and the strange and interesting people who inhabit the far corners of the earth. Such reading opens up whole new worlds of fascinating thoughts.

Then again, if work or troubles are weighing one down too heavily, it is an escape to let a book carry one's thoughts far away. One returns to one's own life refreshed in spirit, it may be by words of comfort written by some very wise and sympathetic person, it may be by some entertaining story that amuses and cheers. Then again, reading the lives of great people who have done much in the

world is an inspiration to the children, who will want to grow up to be like some hero or great man they read about.

To the young people, let us say that it is great fun to know about things; to know what foreign countries are like; to know how other people in the world live and what they do; to know who invented all our modern scientific appliances, and how they did it. Aside from the fun of knowing things, a story of adventure or romance will give you lots of pleasure. Some stories will give you real excitement, and you will never be bored for something to do when you have a good book to read.—*By* MRS. HENRY R. BOWSER, *Library Chairman.*

THE BEST TIME OF THE YEAR

When the world is white with blossom

Of the apple and the pear,

And the tender green of April

Tints the hills long brown and bare,

And the meadow lark on fence post

Sings his throaty song of cheer,

Then I'm absolutely certain

Springtime's best of all the year.

When the corn blades softly rustle

In the scented summer breeze,

And the gold of ripened wheat fields

Ripples like vast inland seas,

And the daisies and wild roses

Brighten roadsides far and near,

Then I'm positive that summer

Is the best time of the year.

When the cool breeze of the autumn

Sings through tree tops red and gold,

And the veil of Indian summer

Hints of deeper mystery hold,

When the goldenrod and horsemint

Bloom with dusty wayside cheer,

Then I'm satisfied that autumn

Is the best part of the year.

When the fields lie deeply buried

'Neath a foot or two of snow,

And the winds pierce to the marrow

With a chill the North men know,

With a wood fire redly glowing

In the grate to lend its cheer,

Then I'm sure the dead of winter

Is the best time of the year.

—*Bertha Hornung in "Boy Life."*

WITH OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

JOSEPH'S WICKER KETTLEDRUM

Pulling aside the heavy drape before his wall bed, seven-year-old Joseph Haydn let in the diagonal band of sunshine that poured down from the window opposite. It seemed to come straight from the cherry tree that stood like a round bouquet white with blossoms in his uncle's dooryard.

It was not the Austrian sunshine, however, that Joseph squinted his eyes to see. For the last quarter of an hour the little cottage had jarred with the steady tramp of his uncle's footsteps.

Was the uncle angered?

Joseph had wondered and shrugged himself but deeper under the bed covers at the thought.

Joseph was still rather awed at this uncle of his. Yet the boy loved him. Joseph had come but a week before to the little cottage in Haimburg. Come the long miles that stretched between it and his home in Rohrau, with his uncle's promise to the dear father singing in his ears—

"Let me tell you this lad has the divine flame and I warrant he will be a great musician. Let me have him. I will teach him whatever he wants to know—and gratis of course. Who knows if he will not one day be a great man—honored and esteemed by kings and queens."

* * *

They had all been standing in the village church at Rohrau after the Sabbath concert where Joseph's father had been the leader.

"But, how can you tell all this beforehand?" the father, reluctant to give up his son, had spoken.

"Why, from the lad's fiddling—I need no further proof—I know what I am about."

"But"—the dear mother had broken in to protest—"the boy is yet but six years old." The mother had reached forth to put her arm about him and hold him protectingly to her.

Then had come the uncle's kindly an-

swer:

"Well, do as you please. Think it over. If you will bring me the lad he shall be welcome. I will take care of him."

Nevertheless, the months had passed and not until a week or so after his seventh birthday had the dear father and mother at last decided to bring him.

There had been happy weeks with his music to follow. To be sure the seven-year-old lad had missed the love and petting of home life, the dear mother watching over him, the glad play with his brothers among the carts and sweet-smelling carriages that stood awaiting new wheels in his father's dooryard. Joseph's heart often ached for the happy family concerts that were as much a part of the evening at home as was the supper that preceded them. Still, was he not studying and learning more each day about the beloved music? Was the good uncle not keeping his promise and teaching him day after day, to thrum the harpsichord, to make the fiddle sing? What though a rap now and then on the fingers smarted? It was always to correct a wrong note. Ah yes, the uncle was kind, kind to him!

And now this good uncle was in trouble. There was no anger on the man's face as the boy looked out upon it. Ah, but his lips were moving. The boy strained his ears to listen.

"Ivan gone, and Easter but a week away." It was a despairing little groan.

Joseph's heart sank—his little face became as sober as his uncle's moving there before him. There was no one to play the kettledrum and next week was Holy Week in the church at Haimburg! His uncle was choirmaster. He would be responsible. He, Joseph, must speak, must say some word of comfort.

"Uncle—" he started, but his voice seemed to run down his throat. "Uncle Frank—"

But the man only looked at him desperately and yanking at the door handle, left the house with a bang of the door

that set the copper plates dancing on the hearth to their own jingle.

* * *

Joseph dangled his little legs over the edge of the high bed thoughtfully. How could he help? How could he practice without an instrument? If only the uncle had a kettledrum he might practice. He had often kept time upon his wooden fiddle during the sabbath concerts at Rohrau.

The boy slipped from his bed and padded across the cold floor to the fire-side. He picked two short sticks from the pile of fagots on the hearth. He beat them upon the top of the stool that stood by. Humming a little tune, he watched, then shook his head.

"There is the time," his voice echoed in the empty room, "but the stool is too hard, the wood does not do. The sticks will not dance upon hard wood."

Deep in thought, the boy pulled on his clothes. His plans moved with his fingers—swiftly. He would look about.

Tucking his night clothes under his pillow and smoothing the blankets on his bed, he ran into the dooryard, then into the shed, and back into the house. He searched the cases. His eye kept flying to the fireside. There were the kettles, but they were filled with the day's cooking. His eyes sped back into the room, then stopped as high atop the case beside his bed, they came upon a basket. Round and deep. Joseph had seen it used in the baking.

He clambered up on a high stool. His arms failed him by several inches. At last a stick and a poke brought the basket tumbling into his arms.

"Just the thing!" exclaimed Joseph, hugging it. He dragged a light coverlet from his bed. The high case yielded a cord and after much tying and tugging to draw the cloth tight and unresisting, Joseph was ready.

Soon a soft rat-a-rat-tat, tat burred through the room while Joseph hummed his own accompaniment. He had heard and learned all the sacred pieces at the practices. The copper plates along the shelf took up the resonance. Such an in-

teresting concert it proved to be that Joseph did not hear the door when it opened later, nor yet hear it close. Not until he felt the familiar jar of heavy walking in the room did Joseph turn about to scramble to his feet.

His uncle stood behind him. Stood with open mouth and staring eyes. Yet a smile as well as amazement shone in them and the man's face softened as the boy tugged at the long scarf that hung almost to the floor outside the uncle's coat.

"Does it not go well? Could I not help with the music at Easter? There are still four days for practice."

The boy turned and drummed a long running "Br-r-r-r!" upon the tight cloth kettledrum, then looked up into his uncle's face.

The man pulled at his chin with long fingers. His voice seemed to come from far away.

"There is a kettledrum in the next village," it was saying. "I shall fetch it for thee."

Joseph's heart took on a little drumming of its own.

Holy Week came. In the far corner of the church platform, Joseph sat beside the kettledrum. Sat and played the sacred music, the long overture, the rejoicing solos. The little sticks had become obedient in the five days' practice. They tripped, they rumbled, they danced. Joseph's heart danced with them.

He had helped the uncle. He was sure of that. Had not the uncle rumbled his hair that last morning and spoken?

"The chapel master of the opera in Vienna meets with us next week. Thy singing mind will make good friends with his. He will want thee, and he can teach thee far more than I."

Joseph's heart sang on. His wicker kettledrum had brought a second promise.—
By Anne M. Halladay, in Christian Science Monitor.

Little minds are wounded by little things.

God is love.

LIFE'S MEANING

These things make life worth while to me:
 A sunset sky, a maple tree,
 A mountain standing grim and gray
 Against the sky line far away;
 A baby's laugh, a summer breeze,
 A roadway winding 'neath the trees;
 A friend to trust, a book to read,
 And work which meets some human need.
 And through it all, a sense of God
 Lifting my soul above the sod,
 The hope and peace which He can give—
 These made it worth my while to live.

—Alice A. Burgess.

"I'm thinking of opening a movie theater."

"Well, there's good money in that business."

"It isn't the money so much; but I'd like to see my wife and kids once in a while."—*Brooklyn Eagle*.

There is no magnetic influence to be found which equals that of moral influence. Conscience is king. Before the power of righteousness, all other powers pale in importance. Intellectual leaders may count their followers by thousands, but moral leaders have the capacity of enrolling millions for a cause they champion.—*Paul Revere Frothingham*.

Mary Roberts Rinehart, writing in "My Story" about her resourceful grandmother, says: "Completely untrained and with no openings outside of school teaching for women in those days, she fell back on her needle." "Reminding one," comments A. W., "of the man who sat down on the spur of the moment."—*Washington Star*.

Character is—what a man is in the dark.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

MRS. HARRY A. STEVENS, *Chairman*, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

MISS ETHEL L. HERSEY, *Secretary*, Hingham, Mass.

MISS EDITH L. JONES, *Treasurer*, 65 Langdon Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Meetings at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, at 10.30 A.M. the first Friday of each month from October to May inclusive.

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, and to give to those living far from a church some of the inspiration of the printed word by the publication of one good sermon, or similar article in each issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. Only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed upon by all churches are printed.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To establish Circulating Libraries in isolated communities, schools, and colleges in rural and mountain districts where public libraries and other educational privileges are not available.

WHERE TO WRITE

Letters containing subscriptions to the paper, fifty cents a year, and money from the *Sunshine Bags* should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

Letters asking for correspondents and appeals to be printed in the *Cheerful Letter Magazine* should be sent to Mrs. John A. McCaddin, *Chairman*, 21 Ashfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

Letters asking for help in studying at home should be sent to Mrs. Isaac Sprague, Jr., *Chairman*, Wellesley Hills, Mass.

Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries should be sent to Mrs. Henry R. Bowser, *Chairman*, 20 Clark Road, Wellesley Hills, Mass. A circulating Library will be started in any small community that is in need of one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references given.